



# Responsible Mobility

A CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION IN VALUES

  
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# **Responsible Mobility**

## **A Challenge for Education in Values**

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## CONCLUSIONS

Exploring some possible ways of planting the seeds of a “mobility ethic” and the tools provided by education in values and their connection with road safety were the main novelties of this seminar, organised by the **abertis foundation** and the Maria Corral research and dissemination body.

We have seen that mobility involves more than just knowing rules and learning techniques. In fact, it means exercising certain fundamental, shared values such as responsibility, good manners and community spirit. This is why the educational angle is extremely important and must be reinforced. This seminar was organised for this purpose: by bringing together the **abertis foundation**’s experience and social commitment to promoting road safety with the Maria Corral organisation’s long career in promoting education and values.

We can see that the challenge of this new culture of mobility includes maturity on the part of road users. Any culture must have specific values: responsibility, respect for people, solidarity, good behaviour, common sense and the common good, and these things are not simply improvised.

More education is required for everybody. For those at driving schools, for professional drivers who are the most exposed to risks while driving, for older people (not just as drivers, but also as pedestrians), for parents so that their behaviour may be imitated, for young people and for children. A good example of this is the chair in safe mobility at the autonomous university of Barcelona, which works to identify the risks associated with each of these educational stages, in order to then design the pertinent counter-measures.

However, as well as being a right, mobility is a responsibility. We currently live with contradictory values, and our behaviour is consistent with a society which encourages and reinforces values such as aggression, competitiveness, exhibitionism, thrill-seeking, self-assertion and over-

estimation of our own abilities. It is even the case that anyone who complies with traffic regulations is seen as a loser. What underlies all this is individualism, which translates into morals which are not based on reason, but on desire; not on duties but simply on rights. We are therefore faced with an obvious need to reflect upon the ethics of consumption, upon responsible consumption.

Societies and individuals drive as they live, with a baggage of values which come from the society. We have also consecrated the value of speed and this has negative consequences in personal and public life. Few accidents are caused by poor manoeuvring. Accidents occur because people take a wrong decision. In the case of overtaking, the manoeuvre may be perfect but the decision to overtake at that moment and in those circumstances may be wrong. The system of values plays a major role in leading individuals to abide by the rules.

Beliefs must therefore be seen as the basis of behaviour; the latter tries to be consistent with the former, to the extent that if one cannot behave consistently with one's beliefs one feels bad. It is important that beliefs concerning mobility become patterns for habitual behaviour. Repeated behaviour with positive results reinforces the belief and makes the behaviour stable and lasting, creating a habit.

For example, we see that young people want to live on the edge, at the limit, in a society which makes them live with no limits. Today, risks are not limited, they are global. Therefore, the culture which goes with these risks – which comes out in one's way of driving – affects everybody. The way is being opened for an adolescence with maximum possibilities in terms of the availability of resources, but on the other hand with very little responsibility, under-protected and seeking risks to the limit of one's possibilities.

All that can be done with adolescents is to "share", rather than imposing rules by obligation. It is important to pass on information, by insisting but making them see that they are appreciated, not controlled. Education for adolescents must start beforehand, in childhood, in order to instil the idea of mutual respect.

Moreover, we have seen through the Seminar that the principles of training in order to be able to drive need to be reformulated. This means changing from learning rules to understanding why these social conventions have become rules. It means incorporating reflection, seeing which methods can be used to maximise safety. It also means placing stress upon raising awareness of traffic issues because the population is not concerned about them, despite their social cost.

### **Rules and Social Commitment**

Prevention must be through education and information, rather than being based solely on a rule-based approach. A culture of responsibility needs to be passed on, not only on a personal level but also on that of thinking of other people and their needs. In other words, teaching values, not just signs.

In this light, driving instructors need to be given a new role. As well as simply giving information about traffic rules, they must also manage to educate - or try to change certain attitudes in - future drivers. Driving schools are a group made up of thousands of instructors and other people, of whom little use has been made up to now in the task of education.

Education must involve understanding and social commitment, i.e. sensitisation. Matters of traffic education can only be approached if people become aware of the phenomenon of mobility, of the problems involved, and understand them. We must therefore demand the right to know, understand and decide. Without this, the system of penalty points, enforcement and rules will continue to be necessary.

Victims of road accidents need better treatment from society. We pay more attention to the aggressor than the victim, which has the effect of encouraging irresponsible driving.

Moreover, we must consider what level of risk we are prepared to accept when we drive. Driving is an activity which involves risks; at times, these

are unknown and increase depending on several factors, including whether you are distracted, driving fast, smoking and so on.

Everybody with a stake in mobility needs to work to find the optimum level of safety, as we currently only have some parts of the solution.

To sum up, we are dealing with an issue which affects sustainability for us. We have to accept some things we may not like: enjoying life, but bearing in mind the interplay between liberty and the acceptance of limits. Mobility is part of this. Education in values does not mean teaching what one has to do, but building skills so that the person can construct themselves in an autonomous, sustainable manner with others. Being polite (all respect on the road falls within this) calls for reciprocal efforts in a society. It means taking advantage of daily life to attempt to stress good practice and positive ways of living together.

Education in values means creating conditions wherein such values can develop rather than trying to fix any particular values. Accumulating courses and subjects promoting values in different areas – such as mobility, for example - is not what is required. What is needed is creativity in order to present attractive information which can stimulate analysis, debate and practice.

All contributions from the different sectors (the authorities, citizens and the service sector) are praiseworthy, as are initiatives such as this seminar and those run by **abertis**, which seek to explore education in road use, social awareness raising, and giving an important place to responsibility as an essential value when making use of the public space.

Mobility needs to be seen as a highly complex issue which involves many contradictions. Even so, it is an area which needs to be approached in order to seek new, creative measures to help build up a sustainable ethic to govern our movements.